Immigration – 1931

Black, Yellow and Red

By BISHOP H. M. DU BOSE.

With something like regularity the immigration ghost stalks into the halls of Congress, looks furtively about, asks a few puzzling questions, gets an answer of hesitancy and then stalks out. Meanwhile the fact is not generally weighed that, in its by and large, immigration has had more to do with the fortunes and fate of the nation than all other factors combined. The reader, of course, will understand that this observation applies to the status of the republic which was reached when, after colonization and early settlement movements, the country had come to a balance of population, assimilated into national characteristics. Approximately, that period fell about 100 years ago, after which all foreign additions to our citizenship became a matter for serious regulation. That, even after that date, and more particularly toward the close of the last century, the rules of admission were ill advised has long been pparent. The dragons' teeth harvest of social, moral, political and industrial evils reaped, especially during the last three or four decades, indicate the reckless extension of immigration privileges.

At a time when it began to be all but too late, our national legislators awoke to, at least, certain phases of the immigration peril; so that we now have the prospect of halting long enough to assimilate the masses of first and second generation aliens in our midst. So great, indeed, is the number of unnaturalized racial strangers amongst us that a question has been raised touching a reduction of representational apportionment for those states where aliens have concentrated in ghettos and over extended industrial areas.

The immigration question early became vital, not only from the fact of the additions of large bodies of unassimilated foreigners to the population of the country, but also because of the importation with many of these of a brood of pestilent doctrines of industrial, social and moral radicalism. To these may be added the consideration of religious abortions and reactions. Of course, the American ideal from the beginning has been favorable to the notion of holding this continent as a home for the oppressed of the earth; but, it is plain to see, this notion must have a limit set to its going. In the nature of the case, the new republic became a racial melting pot; but the time arrived when the contents of the crucible represented such multiples and diversities of populations as to threaten complete ruin to the general output. For it should have been foreseen, as it is now realized, that unrestricted immigration would destroy that heritage of liberty, order and national action necessary to a government based on intelligence, traditional institutions and moral restraints.

Besides these considerations, vast as was the public domain at the beginning, a hundred years of experience has shown that embarrassing delimitations of land holdings is not only a possibility, but an imminent fact. All this answers the question of altruism supposed to be, and which under former conditions was, involved in the issue of foreign immigration to our shores. World charity is, at last, the greatest good to the greatest number. America, in due time, came face to face with the fact that, in order to serve best both itself and the world, it must preserve its own integrity, and that the chance of future ministry to the human race required that it place an embargo on immigration. Selfish considerations, even those of strict prudence, would have dictated a thoroughly closed policy; but the door was left ajar to an extent which barely guarded the future against a continuance of a policy of perils. Meanwhile, the question, more than once, has threatened to become a political complexity, vexing national party platform makers and toiling the steps of candidates for the presidency.

The chromatic scheme written into the heading of this article—"black, yellow and red"—outlines the history of race conjunctions and amalgamations through which this nation has passed since colonial times. The thirteen colonies began their existence as a nation with a considerable body of African slaves variously distributed through the new republic. The population was then small and the slaves were but a small proportion of the whole; but through the naturally prolific quality of the African and through importations, fostered chiefly by the demands of the cotton and tobacco culture of the south, the black population increased phenomenally, in a few states of the south becoming preponderant.

"The Black Problem" became America's first test. It early began to be a nightmare in politics, and, finally, the occasion of fratricidal war. The present generation is too far removed from the bitterness of the anti-slavery strife, and from the orgy of the war which followed, to realize what they meant. For a long period after that conflict, like the Apocalyptic wormwood, the memory of it embittered the tides of national life and thinking, so that no nation was ever made more wretched in that respect than was ours. But in some way, not yet understood, this bitterness has leached itself away; and concerning what was so long known as the negro question the American people hold all but a unity of thought. Indeed, it is doubted if, in all the history of the world, a matter so large, so ramifying and so vexed as was this has been settled in so satisfactory a manner.

What is most to be wondered at is that, in its near settlement, the negro question has left so few effects for evil on the body of American life. It has been settled within the negro race, which retains its hope of separateness, integrity and uplift at no lasting cost to the superior race about it. This is the miracle of history. Other peoples of the white race, except those of the South African and Australian states, who have incorporated large bodies of negroes in their communities have largely amalgamated with them, and have suffered moral deterioration in consequence. The history of America in this respect is the pledge of a stronger and a more enduring race. This is the residum of that fortune and providence which took the American commonwealth in the days of its infancy and experimentation; while the growing humanity and sanity with which the negro is coming to be regarded is the grounding of an altruism which is destined to become a special boast of history.

"The Yellow Peril," as we came to know it at its worst in the early "nineties," threatened a militant development of major proportions. Japan, espousing the cause of her subjects that had either found or sought footing within our borders, took the position that our attitude was discriminating and violative of international courtesy; but the firm stand of state and federal administrations, with a wise and temperate diplomacy, turned the dispute, or rather series of international controversies, into a cause of understanding and good will. Also, it is due to be said that it was the Japanese "scars" that caused America to become fully awake to the immigration peril as a whole and thus became a savor inits legislation.

At the time of the Japanese controversy several states of the western coast were threatened with an invasion of Mongolians that boded moral and industrial confusion to a third of the continent. The controversy which arose took on varying political and sentimental aspects. Some religious bodies strictured the policy of the state governments as un-Christian and destructive of the hope of international good will and world evangelization. It is now easy for all, as it then was for some, to see that the policy was one of world-wide humanis, as it was the wisdom of self-preservation from the American viewpoint. The unlimited, or even moderate, admission of Orientals, if continued at that tome, would have served not only to disorganize industry, but would have threatened the moral and social life of newly populated commonwealths. In the bbroadest sense, then, the embargo on Oriental immigration was in the interest of continued world enlightenment and peace.

The remaining aspect of America's immigration problem brings our history into the red of international peril. The real America of today is constituted of the descendants of sturdy stocks from the British Isles, Scandinavia, Germany, and, to some extent, from France and the Swiss cantons. For the larger part, those strangers who have come to us have brought us a distress which has forced the new policy of reaction against immigration. The moral disorder and the prospect of religious chaos, which have given fright to the more serious minded Americans of today, have their roots in our immigration policy of the era preceding the World War. It was impossible to assimilate the masses of undesirable foreigners which came to us. But their red doctrines put a strain upon American institutions and ideals which it is not now certain we shall be able to bear without the most serious damage to our national integrity.

As from an overnight dream, America has awakened not only to the possibility of a demonstration coming from a section of its naturalized foreign citizenship; but also is made aware of the fact that this element has become a distinct and growing obstacle to the enforcement of its own laws and to the realization of its own policies. Because of this segment of our population and its venal leadership, there exists today an America within the American symbolized in the flag and glorified in the constitution. If our law makers can have the courage to maintain, and even tighten, the present immigration restrictions, then death, the schoolhouse and the spontaneous religious and moral force alive in the American spirit will restore us to the larger hope of the fathers who founded the republic.

The large question now is as to how to tide over the years that superevene between us and the time when America may hope to be herself again; when she may have accomplished the task of straining out the residue which has fallen to her of the spawn from Europe's centers of anarchy and general diabolism. Most of all, the question is how to bring the old American stock, with the well assimilated elements of foreigners, into a resisting force against the red agglomerate of crime and lawlessness. To do this successfully will make a new and greater America.

Colony Of Poles In State Proposed

For the purpose of ascertaining the possibilities of purchasing large tracts of land in Alabama for the colonization of Polish people for farming, a real estate firm of Pittsburgh has written P. B. Jarman, Jr., Secretary of State, inquiring whether the land is available and as to whether the people of Alabama would welcome a project of this kind.

Secretary Jarman yesterday replied that Alabama welcomed all good citizens and offered the services of his office in any matter in which the company desired aid.

The letter was from the firm of Richey-Barnhart and was signed by E. F. Gafney.

Text of the letter follows:

"A client of ours, Polish by descent, has approached us with the thought in mind of ascertaining the possibilities of acquiring a large tract of land in one of the Southern States for the purpose of colonization.

"The object of this letter is to ascertain whether the State of Alabama would welcome a project of this kind if materialization could be accomplished—the attitude of its citizens and the availability of land.

"The underlying idea is the congregation of large numbers of Polish people into communities for the purpose of agricultural pursuits.

"If your expression be in the affirmative would appreciate information as to the location of large tracts and if possible the proper party to whom I may write to ascertain the owners of record."

CALIFORNIA EASIER OVER 'YELLOW PERIL'

Move to Place Japan and China on Quota Would Not Be Seriously Opposed.

LOS ANGELES NEEDS POLICE

$220,000,000 Bond Issue Means Jobs in Due Course, but for Residents Only

By CHAPIN HALL.

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LOS ANGELES, Oct. 15.—California has, for some time, been changing heart on the subject of Oriental exclusion. The "yellow peril" no longer appeals to the Pacific Coast imagination as a prize bogy, and children are no more affrighted by the fear of some unknown terror linked, in some horrid way, with Nippon and China.

A bill which Congressman Johnson of the House Immigration Committee says may be introduced at the next session placing Japan and China on the quota list is not likely to be seriously opposed by California. Its passage would remove an obstacle to improve international relations, irritating and humilating to the nations discriminated against.

Los Angeles has, probably, the largest Japanese colony in the United States, but the group is law abiding, thrifty, industrious; becoming more and more amenable to our ways and customs as the children are graduated with distinction from the public schools.

The Chinese population is too negligible to create a problem, but the quotas allotted in either instance under the parity of nations plan are nominal, admitting only 185 Jap-

anese and 105 Chinese in a year. It would, in fact, be perfectly safe to extend the quota to all the countries of the Near West without fear of contaminating our blood stream or disrupting our economic system.

Annoying the Neighbors.

The West Coast is in more or less of a perpetual upheaval because of rumors that Los Angeles or San Diego are about to lose part or all of their naval bases to San Francisco. Whenever San Francisco gets fed up on the comparative statistics Southern rivals persist in slipping under her tender hide she causes a "rumor" to be printed that the navy is about to be called "home" and rebased in San Francisco Bay. That always gets a rise. Chambers of Commerce unsling their big guns and go into action; telegrams clatter off the wires and Navy Department officials are called from warm beds by anxious transcontinenta telephoners.

San Diego is just coming out from under a report of this kind, breathing easier because Representative Britten, chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, in a letter to Mayor Austin, said there is no prospect of moving to San Francisco any of the navy's San Diego activities.

Both San Diego and Los Angeles have been jumpy ever since Sunnyvale, which is in the San Francisco sector, won the dirigible base over Camp Kearney in the south, and the mere suspicion that they may lose the sailors makes little red spots dance before their eyes. Politics is dragged in via the suggestion that Britten is a San Francisco sympathizer. Britten is a Republican. The dragging, of course, is done by the Democrats.

Los Angeles, Its Police and Crime.

Los Angeles is fighting its way through a crime wave overpublicized by a peculiar set of circumstances. At the scene of a recent murder, where investigators were trying to find out who killed a pretty candy-store clerk, a simple-minded policeman conceived the idea that newspaper reporters had no business "mixing in." In pursuance of his brainstorm he caused the arrest of a reporter, since which time a portion of the local press has busied itself in presenting the crime situation and inefficient policing in a steady series of statistics, demands and exposés.

As a result the Chief of Police is tottering on his throne and the entire force is more demoralized than ever. Police administration in Los Angeles is highly political, the hands of its natural leaders being tied to a large extent by trick commissions, spies and under-cover "pipe lines."

Chiefs, as a rule, last but a few months, and have no real authority. There may be a new one soon, but so long as half of the force, too small by a thousand men, is kept on traffic duty and chaperoning illegally parked automobiles, relief is not apparent.

No Jobs for Non-Residents.

Since the Los Angeles Metropolitan Water District voted $220,000,000 the other day to build an aqueduct from the Colorado River, the board has taken to cyclone cellars to avoid the rushing horde of job seekers.

The proposition was advanced, as a pre-election argument, that 10,000 workers would be required to build the aqueduct, an enterprise which will take from seven to ten years. The army of unemployed interpreted this to mean that jobs would be ready for them the morning after the election, and they reported promptly.

As a matter of fact six months of legal and physical preliminaries will be necessary before any money is available or working plans completed, and it may be close to a year before work is under way on a large scale. Even then the jobs will go to bona fide residents of the district of at least one year's standing.

It is desirable for all concerned that the word should go throughout the country, and that the job hunter be urged to stay where he is. There is no work here on the aqueduct or elsewhere that is not more than compensated by home supply. The demand for labor at Boulder Dam is far less than the supply, and any one unable to maintain himself and family for at least a year should stay away from the Pacific Southwest.